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COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS
OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 183rd MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 2 December 1991, at 11 a.m.

Chairman: Mrs. DIALLO (Senegal)

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The meeting was called to order at 11.25 a.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

1. The agenda was adopted.

DRAFT RESOLUTIONS ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE

2. The CHAIRMAN introduced three draft resolutions on the question of Palestine that would be submitted to the General Assembly. The draft resolutions, identified by the letters A, B and C, referred to the work of the Committee, of the Division for Palestinian Rights and of the Department of Public Information, respectively. Their purpose was to authorize the programme of work envisaged in the programme budget 1992-1993. The three draft resolutions closely followed those adopted by the General Assembly at the forty-fifth session, to which minor changes had been made in order to bring them up to date. Paragraph 2 of draft resolution B included a reference to a computer-based information system on the question of Palestine, in accordance with the request made by the Committee in its report. The wording of paragraph 2 of draft resolution C had been broadened in order to give the Department of Public Information the necessary flexibility to take into account new developments affecting the question of Palestine. Paragraph 2 (e) of that draft resolution requested the Department to organize international, regional and national encounters for journalists.

3. If she heard no objection, she would take it that the Committee wished to approve draft resolutions A, B and C.

4. It was so decided.

5. The CHAIRMAN invited the Observer for Palestine to introduce two other draft resolutions, one concerning the uprising (intifadah) of the Palestinian people, and the other concerning the International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

6. Mr. AL-KIDWA (Observer for Palestine), introducing the draft resolutions, said that they would enhance the effectiveness of the Committee and reflected the unanimous opinion at the international level on the question of Palestine. A series of broadened discussions had taken place recently on the draft resolutions on Palestine and the Middle East. The Group of Arab States had contributed to those discussions and fully supported the amendments to the draft resolutions under consideration.

7. The basic aim of the draft resolution on the International Peace Conference on the Middle East was to reflect the most recent international developments, including the Madrid Conference. The fifth preambular paragraph and paragraph 4 both referred to the convening of that Conference. In paragraph 2, the word "Considers" had been used to show that the General

(Mr. Al-Kidwa, Observer, Palestine)

Assembly maintained its original position without taking a definitive decision that the International Peace Conference was the only mechanism available. A phrase had been added to the end of paragraph 5 referring to a transitional period, as part of the peace process in order to reflect the prevailing political thinking at the current time. Lastly, paragraph 6 had been amended in order to allow the Secretary-General more flexibility. His efforts would not be limited to the International Peace Conference, and he was requested to submit progress reports on the promotion of peace in the region in general. All those amendments had been based on a desire to play a flexible role in the peace process and at the same time maintain the initial position.

8. Only one amendment had been made to the draft resolution on the uprising (intifadah) of the Palestinian people because the situation in the occupied territories unfortunately had not changed. The last preambular paragraph referred to the idea of convening a meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, which was very important in order to draw attention to the situation of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories and ensure their protection. He hoped that the two draft resolutions would be adopted by an overwhelming majority of the General Assembly.

9. Mr. GUVEN (Turkey) said that his delegation had no difficulty in supporting the draft resolution on the International Peace Conference on the Middle East and fully understood the reasons for submitting a draft resolution in which the Madrid Conference and the International Peace Conference were viewed as complementary processes. Nevertheless, he had learned that a number of delegations which had reservations regarding the dual approach in the draft resolution were reconsidering their positions and would abstain or vote against the draft resolution in the plenary Assembly. His delegation attached particular importance to the adoption of the draft resolutions on the question of Palestine by the maximum number of votes in order to maintain the international support for the Palestinian cause. Furthermore, reduced support in plenary meeting might induce Israel to adopt a more intransigent position.

10. Mr. AL-KIDWA (Observer for Palestine) said that it was of great importance to have as many votes as possible in favour of the draft resolution on the International Peace Conference. His delegation had tried to hold negotiations and broaden the discussion to include a large number of groups. No one had informed him that an increased number of member States would vote against the draft resolution in plenary meeting. A number of Western countries had informed his delegation that they would abstain in the vote. His delegation was in constant contact with those countries and had made it clear to them that it was prepared to be flexible as regards any proposal or amendment that they might consider appropriate or necessary. The position of Palestine had not changed. It was prepared to engage in a dialogue with States.

(Mr. Al-Kidwa, Observer, Palestine)

11. The United Nations should send a clear message to the Palestinians that what they had done was just and appropriate and that the international community continued to support them. The Organization should also send a message to Israel that the international community, while pleased with the contribution made, felt that there should be a fundamental change in the Israeli position, which was wrong. That would be a reasonable and well-balanced position. His delegation felt that the draft resolution on the International Peace Conference, if supported by the Committee, would also receive overwhelming support by the majority of Member States in plenary meeting.

12. The CHAIRMAN said that, in view of the statement made by the representative of Turkey and the information provided by the Observer for Palestine, the Committee could remain in contact with representatives of Member States in order to improve the text of the two draft resolutions and ensure the broadest possible support for them when they were put to a vote in plenary meeting. If she heard no objection, she would take it therefore that the Committee wished to approve the two draft resolutions as submitted by the Observer for Palestine, while remaining open to amendments and proposals which could ensure the broadest possible support in plenary meeting.

13. It was so decided.

14. The CHAIRMAN invited the members of the Committee to become sponsors of the draft resolutions and maintain contact with other Member States in order to obtain their support for the draft resolutions in the plenary Assembly. Delegations wishing to sponsor the draft resolutions should contact the Secretariat.

PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME FOR THE ASIAN SEMINAR AND NGO SYMPOSIUM ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE, NICOSIA, CYPRUS, 20-24 JANUARY 1992

15. The CHAIRMAN said that the provisional programme for the United Nations Asian Seminar and NGO Symposium was contained in working paper No. 6. The Bureau suggested that the programme should be adopted on the understanding that, in accordance with established practice, it would continue preparations and keep the Committee informed of all developments, including the availability of experts. If she heard no objection, she would take it that that the Committee wished to approve the provisional programme.

16. It was so decided.

OTHER MATTERS

17. The CHAIRMAN said that the Sixth Islamic Summit Conference would take place in Dakar from 9 to 12 December 1991. On behalf of the Committee, she had accepted an invitation to participate in that important Conference as an observer. If she was unable to leave New York, another member of the Committee would represent it at the Conference.

18. Mr. AL-KIDWA (Observer for Palestine) said that the participation of the Committee represented by the Chairman at the Summit Conference was important. He expressed appreciation to all the Member States that had contributed to the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and had demonstrated the broad international support for the Palestinian people and the Palestine Liberation Organization, its sole and legitimate representative.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.